



U.S. Department of Justice

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PRESS RELEASE

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Group home caregiver sentenced for assaults of residents

Washington, D.C. - United States Attorney Roscoe C. Howard, Jr. and District of Columbia Interim Inspector General Austin A. Andersen announced that on May 17, 2004, James Woolen, 31, of 321 16th Street, N.E., entered a plea of guilty before Senior Judge Stephen G. Milliken of D.C. Superior Court to two counts of assaulting residents of a group home for mentally retarded individuals in Northwest, Washington, D.C., which took place while the defendant was employed as a caregiver at the group home. Pursuant to the plea, Woolen was sentenced to suspended 180-day terms of imprisonment on each count along with a one-year period of probation during which he will be required to complete 100 hours of community service (in a setting without children or vulnerable adults), drug test and undergo any drug treatment required, stay away from the group home, and pay \$100 to the Victim's Crime Fund.

The OIG Medicaid Fraud Control Unit (MFCU), assisted by the Metropolitan Police Department Second District, investigated the assaults. The MFCU, which was created in March 2000, handled this case as part of an effort called the Guardian Angel Project (GAP). GAP is a comprehensive program designed to deter and when appropriate, punish health care providers who intentionally abuse or neglect vulnerable persons under their care. Among the institutions covered by GAP are nursing homes, group homes for adults who are mentally retarded and facilities for mentally ill

persons. These institutions are a main focus of the MFCU's outreach and education efforts. MFCU investigators and attorneys make presentations to industry and professional groups covering topics such as detecting abuse, prompt and accurate reporting of abuse, and the most effective ways to work with law enforcement agencies. Also, emphasis is placed on outreach and education efforts aimed at senior citizen groups, consumer groups, and advocates for elderly and other vulnerable citizens.

In announcing the conviction and sentence in this matter, United States Attorney Howard and Interim Inspector General Andersen praised the work of Special Agent M. Edward Heilman of the MFCU and Detective Donna Wilson of the Metropolitan Police Department's Second District, who investigated the case. Mr. Howard and Mr. Andersen also commended the work of Susan Kennedy, Director of the MFCU, and Assistant United States Attorney Gary Milligan, who jointly prosecuted the case.

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